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A
R E P L Y

TO

Dr. *Middleton's* EXAMINATION

OF THE

Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of
London's DISCOURSES, &c.

Price Eighteen-Pence.

RECEIVED

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



A
R E P L Y
TO
K
Dr. *Middleton*'s EXAMINATION
OF THE
Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of *London*'s
DISCOURSES
ON THE
Use and Intent of PROPHECY,
AND OF HIS
A P P E N D I X
ON THE
Subject of the F A L L.

In a LETTER to the Right Reverend the Lord
Bishop of _____

L O N D O N:
Printed for JOHN CLARKE, under the *Royal-Exchange*.
MDCCL.

R E P L Y

TO

Dr. Wilson's EXAMINATION

OF THE

Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London

DISCOURSES

ON THE

Essence and Intention of THEOLOGY

AND OF HIS

A P P E N D I X



Subject of the F A L L

In a LETTER to the Right Reverend the Lord
Bishop of

L O N D O N :

Printed for John Clarke, under the Royal Exchange

1801

to the same Person, if not to the same Argument. The Examiner of the

Lord Bishop of London's Discourses on Prophecy, after having made the most petulant

Insult on all the venerable Names of Antiquity, has now thought fit to use the same

Freedom with the most respectable one among the Moderns. But sure it is a Point of Glory,

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to suffer among Martyrs and Confessors; And Abuse from some Quarters, is Praise and Reputation. *To elevate and surprize*, appears to be the favourite Plan of the Author, we have to do with: And to obtain the former End, he picks out the most shining Characters for his Frontispiece: This Work is an Enquiry into the Fathers; that, an Examination of the Lord Bishop of *London*: Thus much for Elevation of the Subject: And for the Surprize; you are promised still something new, and a Departure every where from sober Sense, sound Learning, and the Sentiments and Judgments of other Men. If this is not the true Art of writing, it is certainly that of circulating Books, and inviting Customers from every Quarter. It must strangely awaken and delight the Curiosity of the Infidel, to be told in the very Title Page, that the History of the Bible, in the most material Particulars, is altogether a Jest, a Work, not of Truth, but Imagination and moral Instruction: And the Account of the Creation and Fall of Man no more, than a mere Fable on which no Superstructure of Reasoning can be built, and from which no solid Conclusion, even in Favour of the moral Instruction, can be fairly deduced. The playing with great Characters ever was,
and

and ever will be an Entertainment to the Mob of Readers, who may find their several Accounts in sinking those Characters to the Level of their own, and appearing Men of Consequence, by talking freely of those who are so.

It may well be Matter of just Wonder, that a Work, so often and so long exhibited to the Publick, and hitherto received with all the Marks of Approbation and Esteem, should now meet with a contemptuous and bitter Censurer, in the Person of our Examiner. He himself is aware of it, and offers his Reason for it. What is it? He had not seen the Discourses, till now; and read them now, rather in Compliance with others, than his own Inclinations. And it was well for the Bishop, he did not enter upon this Task sooner; otherwise he had not so easily slid into Reputation; since these Animadversions would probably have appeared much earlier. But why all this Neglect? Was the Author below his Notice? Or the Subject? Neither: He allows the Importance of the one, and the Capacity of the other to adorn it. Strange! that the most prevailing Reason with others for reading a Book, should be with him the very Reason for not doing it. But he

feared the Biass, which such Authority and Talents might lay upon his Judgment. A Fear this, in Appearance a little unnecessary; since he has avowedly read the best ancient Authors, and found no Difficulty in departing from them all. But perhaps there was more Danger from modern Divines; but then it was only the Danger of Loss of Time, as appears from what follows: "For he had, upon his own Lights and Skill in Scripture Interpretation, settled in his Mind a Notion of the Thing in Question, and then thought it an idle Curiosity and Waste of Time, to inquire, what any modern Divine had preached or written about it." He came therefore settled and determined to the Perusal of this Work; he professes his Prepossession; he condemns, before he tries; he expects, before he reads; And then it is no Wonder, he found this capital Work of his Lordship to be just such as he expected; *exhibiting a Species of Reasoning peculiar to himself, ever subtle and refined, yet never convincing; and proper rather to perplex, than to illustrate the Notion of Prophecy; and to amuse, rather than instruct an inquisitive Reader.* He might with more Justice have said, if I may be allowed to play upon Words, a Reader of the Inquisition; an Officer, to extract

tract, by Racks and Tortures, Confessions to justify his Suspicions of a Party, destined to Condemnation. For what else is the Treatment in his Note, on the Omission of a short Preface in the two last Editions, which had appeared in the three foregoing? This must, it seems, needs afford Matter of Speculation. Well, what is it? The Bishop must have dropt it, because it gave an Account of the Design of his Work, which appeared inconsistent with the Evangelists Method of citing Prophecies. *But this Offence, tho' now removed, as far as it was given by the Preface, remains still in its full Force in the Body of the Discourses.* Why then, this could not be the Reason for removing the Preface. Sure he has forgot the awkward Compliment, before made, of his Lordship's Capacity and Art in adorning and dressing a Subject, or he could never have put upon us such a bungling Reason for throwing this Preface out of Sight. What? Withdraw the Preface on Account of Offence, and yet leave it in full Force in the Body of the Work, without the least Softening, Guard, or Alteration? It is utterly incredible in a Man of common Sense; much more in a Man of Capacity and Art. But this is the modern Stretch of Thought and Liberty of

Inquiry, first without and against Reason to imagine, and then with Assurance to assert; to be free by being rude; and assume the Privilege of seeing farther into Things than other People, by seeing, what no one in his sober Senses can possibly see, or be aware of. I have not the Honour to be in the Secrets of the Author of the Discourses, and therefore shall not presume to thrust myself into his Thoughts and Intentions: But one Reason for the Omission in Question, if it was not owing to mere Accident, I think, may be fairly drawn from the Bishop's own Works, and neither offends against Modesty or Candour. He tells us in a short Advertisement before his Appendix, that it was originally drawn up in Answer to the Author of the *Literal Scheme of Prophecy*; but that Author being dead, he has now considered the Objections not as his, but as common to all, who call in Question, or are offended with the History of the Fall, as recorded by *Moses*. The Discourses on Prophecy likewise were at first intended and composed with a View to a particular Author; and the Preface contains some strictures on the fallacious Way, in which he considered single and detached Passages: It is natural to imagine, that the same Consideration, which induced his Lordship to drop the parti-

particular Adversary in one Case, might induce him also to do so in the other, in Order to make both Works more general and useful; and that this was the Cause of leaving out the Preface in the later Editions. The rest of the Ribaldry of this Note may shew the Boldness or Rage, but not the Politeness of this Writer: It is as inconsistent with Truth, as good Manners: To repeat Slander and Abuse, is to countenance and spread it.

But it is Time to come to the Point of Argument, and propose the State of the Controversy, I am entering upon.

An Infidel Writer had, with some Shrewdness, put the entire Proof of Christianity upon the Foot of Prophecies: This single Support he weakens, by splitting it into as many Parts, as there are Prophecies: And next endeavours to knock them all away successively one after another. He has been answered in his own Way; the Wickedness of the Design has been exposed; the Weakness of the Means has been shewn; and particular Texts have been vindicated and cleared. Such Writers are perhaps with no great Difficulty answered; but they are not so easily silenced: There will still be Room for Chicane and Wrangling,

in the Interpretation and Application of single detached Passages and Phrases: He who will not be convinced, need not confess that he is; but may prate on, without Genius, without Knowledge, without End. The Freethinker of our Age is the little Fly on the Pillar, who complains of the Inequalities and Juttings of the Surface, which a larger Eye discerns to be the Beauty of the Building. He does in the Works of Providence, what minute Artists do in those of Creation; objects to this enormous Mountain, this superfluous Sea, that winding River; cavils at this Part of a Dispensation, that single Passage; because he has not Capacity or Inclination to see, what others admire, the Subserviency of each Part to the Perfection of one amazing System, in the material, intellectual and moral World. The learned Author therefore of the Discourses on the Use and Intent of Scripture Prophecy, takes a comprehensive View of the successive Predictions and Institutions relative to Christ, exhibits them in a just Series and beautiful Order, and then founds the Strength of the Argument from Prophecy on the Lights each throws on the other from the Beginning to the End, till they conspire to form such a perfect Day, as cannot be withstood; as must force Consent, or silence

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Petulance and Unbelief. For this Service to the Christian Cause he is now called in question by the Examiner, chastised as fanciful and antisciptural in the present, and threatened with future Animadversions: But with what Justice this is done, we are to see in the Process of this Argument: In which I propose to make good the following Positions.

That there is held forth to us in Scripture such a Series and Chain of Christian Prophecy, as is asserted, and that it reaches to the Beginning of Things.

That such Consideration of the Series and Connection of Prophecies is scriptural, and warranted by the Practice of Christ and his Apostles.

That this is the best, if not the only Way, of dealing with the modern Enemies of Christianity, and therefore to be admitted and chosen, even upon Supposition, that Christ and his Apostles had used a different Method with those of their Age.

The Nature of Prophecy, it's Comparison with, and Difference from Miracles, in Point of Argument, shall be stated and proposed.

First

First for the Series of Prophecy. Greatness, Contrivance, Wisdom, Beauty, Order, and Subsistence, are the divine Signatures, stamped on all the Works of Creation and Providence. It is therefore no Wonder, if the strongest Impression of these Characters appears in the Recovery of the lost Species of Mankind, which I may be allowed to call the favourite Work of God. His Regard for it may be seen, by the Destination for this Action of so great, so dear a Personage, as his only begotten Son, who was in the Bosom of the Father, and with whom, by a Voice from Heaven, he declared himself well pleased. Since then such is the Saviour, and the whole Race of human Creatures have a common Interest in the Salvation; was it not proper, was it not necessary, they should all, from Time to Time, have some Notices of it, and be directed to conform themselves to this great and concerning Event? Is the Commencement of the World too early an Epoch for him, to whom all his Works are known from the Beginning? Or are the Antediluvians, and those who lived near a thousand Years after the Flood, the only wretched Parts of the Species, exempt from the Care of Providence, without Light, without Hope, without the least Ground of religious Trust,

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or the least Vouchsafement in the Point of the common Salvation? Far be such Notions from the Maker and Preserver of Men. If this was the Case, Angels would not desire to look into these Things, nor superior Intelligencies make it a Pleasure to contemplate and admire them: They survey, as we in an inferior Degree may do, all the Parts of this stupendous Work, and trace all the delightful Scenes of this divine Drama; the Subject of which is planned in the Beginning of Things, opens gradually in all the succeeding Ages, and is prepared for and kept in View through Thousands of Years, with infinite Variety of Incidents, and exact Unity of Design and Action; till they behold, with Astonishment and Rapture, the final Accomplishment of the predicted Seed of the Woman in the extraordinary Virgin Incarnation of JESUS, the only Name under Heaven given to Man, by which he can be saved.

The first Scene discloses the Creation of a new World, presents the Actors in the Piece, the Situation of Man in Innocence and Happiness, his Forfeiture of both by the Introduction of moral Evil, the Sentence of God, who in Judgment remembers Mercy, on the several Offenders, and his Promise of a Seed
arising

arising from the Woman, who should triumph over the prime Author of all this Mischief. He clothed the naked Pair with the Skins of Beasts, and probably then appointed the Sacrifice of them in a religious View, to express the Manner of procuring Salvation, by the vicarious Sacrifice of this Seed of the Woman. Accordingly we have, among the first Transactions of Mankind, an early Account of the Practice of Sacrifice, and that, as an Offering for Sin. When the Use of Flesh was first indulged to Man, and afterwards throughout all the Mosaic Institution, still the Blood was reserved for the like religious Office, to be poured on the Earth, or Altar, as bearing a Representation of, and conveying by Faith an Interest in that Blood, without which there is no Remission of Sins. A People are separated from all other Nations, a Law is given of Institutions, Rites, and Ordinances, which, in the Spirit and Sense, all direct the Eye forward to this Prince and Deliverer: They were to see him, but not now, as *Balaam* speaks. In the mean Time, a Succession of Prophets is raised up, who are inspired to describe all the Particulars of his Birth, Life, Actions, Doctrines, Death, Resurrection and Glory. The Region, nay, the Town, he was to be born in, is previously

ously marked, and the very Period of this future Event is counted and fixed. The Seed of the Woman is first confined to the Seed of *Abraham*, in whom all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed; then to a certain Tribe descended from him; to a particular Family of that Tribe; and the Lion of *Judah* was the sure Mercies of *David*. Difficulties arise, Events perplex, and Clouds darken the Prospect: The Kings of the Earth stand up, the Rulers take Counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed: Revolutions of Empires may happen, the royal Tribe may be captived, and increase the Stream with it's Tears; but it shall not be lost, nor it's Families be confounded: *Cyrus* shall be called by Name, two hundred Years before he is born, who shall restore it; and the Temple shall be rebuilt, into which the Messiah must necessarily come, to make it by his Presence exceed the former in Glory. Let *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, *Jews* and Strangers, conspire against the holy Child *Jesus*, they but prove his Title by all their Rage, and fulfil the Prophets in slaying him.

The Unravelment of all these Providences, this Accomplishment of Declarations and Institutions, this Correspondence and Reference

of all the Parts to the Whole, at once amaze and convince; they throw Light on a Multitude of Allusions, Hints and Adumbrations, which before were not at all, or but obscurely seen; and all together constitute such a Collection of wonderful Circumstances, which never met in any Person before, and never can meet in any other after Christ, in whom all the Promises of God are Yea and Amen. This collective View of the Prophecies, and the Argument from it, must be the most fair, the most entertaining, the most persuasive, the most touching, the most conclusive; and therefore is very judiciously drawn out, and most properly offered, for the Refutation of the most obstinate short-sighted Creature in the Universe, the modern unbelieving Disputant, to whom all other Methods of considering these Things have proved ineffectual.

And what has our Examiner to say against the Justness, the Wisdom, and the Propriety of this Scheme? His Objections shall be considered, and answered. Such a Series and Chain of Prophecies, connected together, and collecting irresistible Strength by the Union of all the Parts; he intimates to be mere Fancy and Vision. But sure this is running counter

counter to the scriptural Accounts of the Matter, where, he that runs, may read the long Succession and gradual Openings of a vast Number of prophetick Revelations, centering in one Point, relative to the same divine Person, communicated to the several Generations of Men, and exhibited through the different Ages of the World. And surely it is equally running counter to Reason, that one Link or two of this vast Chain should be strong enough to bear the Weight of the whole Length, and that a single Prophecy should as forcibly draw a reluctant Objector, as the longest Series of them; that is, that a few Parts should be equal to the Whole. The collective Strength and Relation of all the constituent Parts of this Chain drew the *Jewish*, the Heathen World, into a full Expectation of the promised great Personage, about the Time of his Appearance, which no single Predictions or Intimations could have done: Many, besides him, were born at *Bethlehem*, in the Days of *Herod* the King, of the Tribe of *Judah* too, and of the Family of *David*: But to no one, besides him, happened, and no one did, these and all the other Particulars, given as Criteria of him by all the Prophets. If we are put upon the Use of Prophecy, shall we not use it in it's collected

lected and full Force, against an Adversary of Malice and Chicane, who will vex, though he cannot hurt, who makes little Sallies and Attacks on Syllables and Phrases, but dares not stand the Trial in a pitched Battle, or if he does, is sure to fall in the Engagement? Single Prophecies, Adumbrations and Figures, were designed to give only a certain Degree of Light, fitted to the Times and Occasions of their Delivery; but all together form a perfect Day. Some were industriously blended with more, some with less Degrees of Obscurity and Perplexity, to serve the various Purposes of Providence, to prevent the Opposition of Men and Devils to their Accomplishment, supersede the Use of continual over-ruling Miracles, and engage Friends and Enemies to the Completion of the great Design. The Scoffer of Religion will here find abundant Employment for his Genius and Pleasantry, and cavil and laugh, as long as he has Breath and Applause.

But the Examiner says, this was the precise, the only Method, be it convincing, or not, which Christ, the Apostles and Evangelists, used for the Proof of Christianity, and Conviction of Gainsayers: They proposed the several Prophecies, occasionally, singly, and

and independently, and never dreamed of, or mentioned a Collection or Series of them.

We will admit this Position for the present, without disputing it's Truth, in order to expose first the Consequence from it. Christ and his Apostles had to do with a Sort of Unbelievers, to whom this Method was suited: The Bishop with those, to whom another Method better agrees. The ancient *Jews* previously allowed the Application of most of the prophetic Passages of their Scriptures to the Messiah: The Business to them was to shew their Application to *JESUS*, that they might draw the Consequence of his being that Messiah, all their Scriptures led them to expect. To such therefore these Prophecies were pertinently urged, as Occasion offered, either singly, or collectively: And among them, perhaps some were proposed and pointed out, whose Reference was not clearly discerned, in order to ascertain them, by the Authority of those Works, which Christ offers in full Proof of his Mission and Prophetic Office, and, agreeably to the avowed Principles of that People, of his Right of interpreting such Writings, and of determining and fixing their just Meaning and Intention, even in doubtful Cases.

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Try

Try this Method with the modern *Jew*, and you will lose your Labour: He will new point the Passage in Question, before he will admit the Force of it in Favour of a Person, he is resolved not to receive for his Messiah; and will arbitrarily depart from all the Rules of Interpretation, the Sense of his Fathers, and the Belief of the whole *Jewish* Church, before Prejudice or Interest had taken Place; rather than accept for his Saviour, the Destroyer of his Nation. You must therefore press him with the whole Tenor of his Scriptures, the collective Force of Prophecy in the many Places and Passages, which he cannot distort, he cannot corrupt; if you would proceed with any rational Hopes of Success; if you would convince; or if that will not be, if you would refute him.

The modern Infidel, with all the Prejudice of the above Character, is still a stranger and less manageable Creature. The former allows Miracles to be a Proof of divine Mission, and of a Right of ascertaining the Meaning of Scripture: The latter allows neither, and recurs to Scripture Prophecy, the Belief of the *Jew* indeed, but the Infidel's Scoff and Derision, in order to set aside the

the Christian Pretensions, by resting them on a Foundation, which he thinks unable to support them. Will you attend him through all his Mazes, and let him puzzle and obscure this or that single Light, which he endeavours to put out, or divert, as fast as it begins to glimmer in his dark Place? Breathing out all the Rage and Threatenings, but without the Ingenuity of the Apostle to the Gentiles, he must be struck down to the Earth, if not converted, like him, by a Light from Heaven at Mid-day, above the Light of the Sun; by the united Display and Lustre of Prophecies collected and viewed together. For it is with the Light of Prophecy, as with that of the Sun; it consists of many Parts of different Texture, Bigness, Strength, and Colour: You may separate here and there a fainter Ray, and split and distort it, till it becomes scarce visible: But Union makes so distinct a Point of Light, that all, who have Eyes to see, must see and acknowledge it.

Having thus far shewn the Inconclusiveness of the Position, let us now examine the Truth of the Fact, namely, that Christ and his Apostles never use themselves, and never direct this comprehensive View and Series

of Prophecies through the several Ages of the World, for the Conviction of unbelieving, and the Settlement of doubting Persons. It is true, they often occasionally mention, and from Time to Time apply, Christ in his own Person, and the Evangelists in the History of his Life, single and detached Passages, relative to him: And this with no less Propriety, than Necessity; since no Miracles could demand the Admission of a Person for the *Jewish* Messiah, without shewing his Agreement with the prophetic Characters and Signatures, given of him by God himself in the *Jewish* Scriptures. But I strangely misread the Gospels; if the large and successive View of the Prophecies was not used by the same Jesus and his Apostles, and directed for the same Purposes, for which the Author of the Discourses offers it. I look no farther for Proof of it, than to a few of the Passages, quoted by the Examiner in Proof of the contrary. Jesus tells the *Jews*, that his Person and Character were marked out by *Moses* and all the Prophets, and that he allows the Appeal thither to this joint Evidence, *for he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them.* Again, in an Expostulation with the *Jews* for their obstinate Rejection of him, he exhorts them

*to search the Scriptures; for in them, says he, ye think ye have eternal Life; that is, the Promise of a great Salvation and Deliverance, by the Hands of the glorious Personage you expect: And those are the Scriptures, which testify of me. I am the Person: The Person, in whom all the Characters meet, all the Predictions centre: Direct then your Search through all your Scriptures, as high as Moses, you will find me in them all. Your Unbelief is arraigned by all the prophetic Writers; you are accused by Moses, in whom ye trust: For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me; for he wrote of me. Thus we see, a thorough Search of the prophetic Writings of Scripture, even as far as Moses's Time, and beyond that of his Life, as shall be hereafter shewn; is directed, as the best Cure for obstinate Unbelief. Again, to the doubting and sorrowful Disciples going to *Emaus* he says—O Fools and slow of Heart to believe *all*, that the Prophets have spoken! Did they not successively from Age to Age presignify the Sufferings and subsequent Glory of Christ? *And beginning at Moses, (who yet in his own Person said nothing of this Subject) and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the Things concerning himself.**

And no Wonder, their Doubts vanished, their Faith and Joy revived, and their Hearts burned within them, while he thus talked with them, and opened this amazing Extent and Display of all the Scripture Prophecy, relating to himself. Again, while these Things were telling to the Apostles, JESUS stood in the midst of them, shewed his Hands and Feet, and eat before them; and having thus dispelled their Fears, assured their Hearts, and fixed their Attention, he said unto them, *these are the Words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all Things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me*: That is, in the whole Bible, agreeably to the then known Division of it: Then opened he their Understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures; and one Means of opening their Understandings was, no Doubt, his giving this prophetic History of the Scriptures, and setting before them, throughout the whole Compass of them, a Delineation of the great, the common Salvation wrought by him, of his Sufferings, his Death, and the End and Intent of them, *that Repentance and Remission of Sins might be preached in his Name among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Thus

Thus our Saviour here refers his Disciples, and every where the *Jews*, to a general Review of the Scriptures, and to a long Search of himself, throughout the Bible, from the Beginning to his own Time. He applies some Passages of the Prophets, as descriptive of his perverse Hearers; but applies very few particular Promises to himself, and those, not so much to prove his Mission, as to introduce some Piece of Instruction, as in his Sermon in the Synagogue from a Passage read out of *Isaiah*. He appeals, I say, to very few particular Prophecies of himself; and those, he does mention, are the most general, and of themselves, without his Authority as an Interpreter sent by God, the least conclusive: And he mentions them perhaps for that very Reason, in order to ascertain them to that Meaning: For he every where founded his Mission on his undeniable Miracles, performed in great Numbers, and demands Belief for his Works Sake, and then proceeds to teach, as one having Authority.

But the Examiner is so visionary, so wide of all Scripture Truth, as to assert, that our Saviour, not only always uses single and independent Prophecies, but rests the whole Proof of his Mission upon any one of them,

alone and by itself. This Discovery is extraordinary indeed, and, when made out, will appear quite entertaining. JESUS betrayed forbids Resistance to his Disciples, says he could call Legions of Angels to his Rescue; but that then the Scriptures would not be fulfilled: Then is added,—all this, *before and at the Time of his Apprehension*, was done, that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled: Plainly signifying, says our Observer, “ that there was not any Circum-
 “ stance of his Life, which had not been
 “ foretold in such a Manner, that the Ac-
 “ complishment of it, by it’s Conformity
 “ with the Prediction, might answer the Pur-
 “ pose intended by God of demonstrating the
 “ Divinity of his Character.” I learn but one Thing from hence, that when this Author says, this or that Scripture plainly signifies or intimates something, I may generally depend upon it’s plainly signifying the direct contrary. Does our Saviour here assert or plainly signify, that the Correspondence of one single prophetic Circumstance with himself is sufficient Evidence for the Point of his Messiahship? Why then does He, or his Historian here, mention others? Nay, why were any others at all given and described? Indeed, if JESUS had not been betrayed, and
 suffer-

suffered, as several Prophets foretold, he could not have made good his Title and Pretensions: But even this single Circumstance, ever so well made out, could not alone have ascertained him to be the *Jewish* Messiah: Others had Sorrows, and suffered like Things, and at the same Time with him. In short, the not fulfilling one single predicted Circumstance, might have been sufficient to bar his Claim to the Messiahship of the *Jews*; but not only one, but every Circumstance must conspire, to establish and fix it. And thus the Argument from Prophecy rests not on single detached Passages, occasionally appealed to, but on the Union and Agreement of all that was said and done, relative to this Matter.

Agreeably to this, the Evangelists, upon all proper Occasions, mention the general and well grounded Expectation of such a Person as JESUS CHRIST, raised by successive Predictions and Promises, in the several Ages of the World; and that every one was awake to Inquiry, and ready to ask the Question—*Art thou He, that should come?* And as the Prophetic Marks of him gradually went on to discover themselves more and more; the *Israelites* indeed, who had no Guile,

Guile, said, *we have found Him, of whom Moses and the Prophets did write.* The sacred Historians set down a Number of these Signatures, in a Series, laid at once before the Reader, and shew all along the Correspondence of the Predictions and the Accomplishment of them, in the Birth, Life, and Actions, the Sufferings and Glory of Christ. They write them down in Order indeed, as the several Parts of their History furnished them with Occasion; for the Whole cannot be known, without the Knowledge of the Parts: But they no where rest the whole Proof of Christ's Mission on this or that single independent Passage, which may be thought ambiguous or allusive, but upon the Strength of them all, in their Relation and Concurrence. They mark the successive Accomplishment of Passages of different Kinds and Clearness, some express, some allusive; like Lines, some stronger, some fainter, meeting in one plain, distinctive Point; and say—Thus it was written—This was done on Purpose, that the Scripture might be fulfilled; or so, that eventually such an Allusion was answered; and all together carry irresistible Evidence of *JESUS* being the very Messiah. To cavil at this or that particular Application, as not indubitable, as admitting some Degree of
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of Darkneſs and Uncertainty, ariſing perhaps from the Diſtance of Time, the Ignorance of Language, or the wanton Fancy of the Critic; is not the Way of diſcerning the Strength of the Argument from Prophecy: You muſt take a comprehensive View of this whole Diſpenſation, as held forth and exhibited through all the Scriptures, and compare the entire Evidence, as Chriſt has directed, and the Apoſtles have in their Writings done, reſting on clear and indiſputable Paſſages, and truſting for the juſt Application of others, leſs clear and concluſive, to thoſe, who claim Inſpiration for their Guide, and juſtify that Claim, by the evident Exertion of Powers from above. Such a Search of Scripture the learned Biſhop has made, and in ſuch a Manner, as to merit and receive the Thanks of all other Men, and incur the ſingle Censure of his Examiner.

But perhaps after all, it is not ſo much the Series of Prophecy, which he objects to, as the Extent of it. Chriſt and his Apoſtles ſtretch this Chain only for ſeveral hundred Years, as far as *Moses*; the Biſhop for ſeveral Thouſands, as far as *Adam*: And this, it ſeems, very fancifully. There is then no Foundation for this Proceeding in Reaſon
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and Scripture: Let us consider it in both these Views.

God was reconciling the World to himself in Christ: all the World, in Christ; the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. Without Hope of such Reconciliation, without Trust in Acceptance by God, Religion, Worship, Prayer, Works, are Phrenzy and Madness. Such Hope was the necessary Foundation of Religion before the Flood, as well as after it, and therefore in Reason ought to have been given: But such Consolation could not be given, consistent with the Method of God's Dispensation, without Promises of Salvation, without Prophecies and Representations of that Beloved, in whom we are all accepted; without opening the Decree, that, *as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* One great End then of Prophecy, was the Comfort, and, in consequence of that, the Religion of the old World, through the several Ages of it, the earliest, as well as the latest: This Consolation, this Hope therefore, was given to all Ages. Accordingly the Apostles every where speak of the Christian Salvation, as the great, the constant Hope of their Ancestors. Thus *Paul at Antioch* calls the glad Tidings of the

Gospel the Promise, which was made to the Fathers. Again before *Agrippa*, he not only appeals to this Hope of the Fathers, but lays it down as the Foundation of all their religious Worship and Service:—And now I stand and am judged for the Hope of the Promise made of God unto our Fathers; unto which Promise our twelve Tribes, instantly serving God Day and Night, hope to come. And the same Apostle in his Epistle to the *Hebrews* has given us a Catalogue of great and good Men, from *Abel* to *Samuel*, and the succeeding Prophets, Heroes, and Martyrs of the *Jewish* Church, who all died in Faith, not having received the Promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth; and desired a better Country, that is, an heavenly.

But to proceed in the Argument. There were Prophets before the time of *Moses*: An Apostle mentions one, *Enoch*, the seventh from *Adam*, who by Faith too was translated, and who prophesied of the Heretics of the latter days, and their Destruction by the Lord, for all their ungodly Deeds and hard Speeches against him. Nay, there were Pro-

Prophecies of Christ, as early as the Beginning of the World: *Zacharias*, filled with the Holy Ghost, said, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his People, and hath raised up a Horn of Salvation for us, in the House of his Servant David, as he spake by the Mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been since the World began; to perform the Mercy promised to our Fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant, the Oath, which he sware to our Father Abraham.* *Abraham* lived long before *Moses*, and had the Promise, that the Desire of all Nations should come from him, and that in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed: And we have the Authority of an Apostle for saying, that Seed was Christ; and the Authority of Christ himself, *that Abraham saw his Day and was glad.* What Effrontery then is it, to tell People who have the Scriptures in their Hands, that the Talk of Christian Prophecy, beyond the Time of *Moses*, is Fancy and Vision? But the Assertions of Christ, and the Reasonings of Apostles, may well pass for a Jest and Dream with him, who gives no better Name to the most important History of the Bible, than that of Fable.

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But the Examiner says, Christ fixes the Epocha of Christian Prophecy at *Moses*, and deduces it from thence through the *later Prophets*. But why the *later Prophets* only? This has been just now shewn to be against Fact. What then is his Reason? It may perhaps be that strong one, the Order of the Words in the Phrase, *Moses and the Prophets*; where the Name of *Moses* stands before that of the Prophets. But if this Argument will prove *Moses* the Predecessor of all the Prophets in question; I will, by the same Argument, prove some of them to have preceded him: For St. Paul before *Agrippa* declares, that his whole Crime was, the witnessing and saying concerning Christ none other Things than those, which the *Prophets and Moses* did say should come.

The Examiner will probably say, the Life-time of *Moses* is the true Epocha, because it is joined with the Law, which he certainly delivered in his Life-time: *We have found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, &c.* This is Acuteness, but not Solidity, an Argument to the People, an unlearned Deduction. *Moses* stands for all the Works of *Moses*, and the Book of *Moses*, is all his Books, historical, as well

as legislative. *As touching the Dead, that they rise, says Christ, have ye not read in the Book of Moses, how in the Bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? The works of Moses, as at this Day in the Synagogues, made one Roll: The Division and Names of the five Books of Moses, we now have, is modern, and unknown to the antient Jewish Church, who distinguished them only by the first Word of each, and mentioned Moses, the Law, the Book of Moses, as equivalent Terms, and comprehending the whole Pentateuch. Moses teaches and prophecies in all Parts of his Work, and is argued from by Christ and his Apostles, as well in the Prophecies he recorded, as in what he uttered himself of that Kind. To deduce the Series of Prophecy from Moses and the Prophets, is to begin it, not only from that he himself delivered, but also from those he has related of others preceding him; that is, to carry it up to the earliest Transactions of our World: And thus Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, contain all the Predictions, Exhibitions, Allusions, Types, and Figures of the Christian Dispensation, in the historical, legislative, prophetic Parts of Scripture, and in the Hagiographa or Psalms; a Division of the whole Bible,*

Bible, which the *Jews* were as well acquainted with, as of the Heavens and the Earth, to express the whole of the Creation of our World; or Evening and Morning, to express the Nucthemeron, or twenty-four Hours. But to silence for ever this weak Objection, we have the Words of Christ himself, appealing not only to *Moses* in one particular Part, or Book, but to his Writings in general, and without Distinction, for the prophetic Evidence of his Mission. For in *St. John's Gospel*, c. v. at the End, he gives the *Jews* the true Cause of their Unbelief, and says to them—*Do not think I will accuse you to the Father: there is One that accuseth You, even Moses, in whom ye trust: For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of me: But if ye believe not his Writings, how shall ye believe my Words?* We are then warranted, notwithstanding this little Cavil, by the Example of Christ and his Apostles, to look beyond the Age of *Moses* for Prophecies relating to the Saviour: Nay we are directed to carry our Search as high, as the earliest Ages recorded by *Moses*; even up to *Adam* the first Man, who is in Scripture contrasted with the future Prince of Life; the first *Adam* of the Earth, earthy, the second,

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the Lord from Heaven; the One, the Ruin of our Species, the other, the Restorer of it to Life and Immortality: *for as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

But here we are forbid to set our Foot in an imaginary Paradise, or form a prophetic Argument from a mere Fable and Apologue. Yet why may we not argue from this Transaction, since the Apostles have done it before us? Why not look for the Promise, where the Occasion first appears? Why not connect the Beginning and End of the Christian Dispensation, the first with the second *Adam*, in the same Narration, as the sacred Writers do? Why is it not as conclusive for the Victory, as the Fall of Man? Be the Principle true, the Consequence is false. Be the Narrative Fable, Allegory, Apologue, or what you will; it was, at least, a moral Instruction, only a particular Way of telling a confessed Truth, by an Author allowed at present, on all sides, to be directed by Heaven in the Substance and Meaning of the Relation, if not the Manner and Words of it, and is impertinent and unworthy of any Sort of Inspiration, if it does not convey such Notice to Man-

Mankind, that Sin and Death got Admission into the good World of God, by the means of some Tempter or other, over whom yet a future Victory is promised, by some Person or Persons, hereafter to be born of Woman.

But we need not thus easily surrender our Bibles to the Fancy and Petulance of every wanton bold Invader. One Concession will not give Rest to him, who seems plainly to strike at the whole. The Narrative before us carries no Mark or Intimation of it's being designed for any thing, but Fact: It is conducted with the serious Air of Truth: the same Air, with which the Creation of the Heavens, and the Earth, and its Inhabitants, is set forth. If you give up one, on Account of some Difficulties, arising from the abstruse Nature of the Subject and Language; you may with equal Justice give up the other: The Examiner will easily slide it upon you, as a mere Theory of the Earth, like that of *Burnet*; though an Apostle speaks of the Earth standing in and out of the Waters, and attests the Truth and Reality of the Mosaic Account. He laughs at Woman being formed out of the Side of Man, in Defiance

of Christ himself, who, like *Moses*, deduces their inseparable Union from their Creation thus in a Pair; as his Apostle does the Inferiority of the one to the other, from the same History, because the Man was not of the Woman, but the Woman *out of the Man*. But the Apostle, it seems, might have spared his refined Reasons for this Subjection, from either the Priority of Birth or Sinning: The Examiner can from Nature give it a more solid Foundation; the superior Strength of the Male in every Species of Creatures.

But it is time to proceed in the History of the Fall, and weigh the Importance of the Objections to it. The Place is a Garden of Pleasure and Delight, described by its Situation, Rivers, and Productions. But no Geographer has ever been able to find this Spot upon the Face of the Globe. What then? Is this an Argument against the Existence of it, while the Use of it subsisted? Is this the only Place upon Record, where the Course of Rivers has changed their Channels, and where the antient Face of Nature or Art has been altered and perplexed? Might not, did not Sin, introduce an universal Alteration of things? And might not a Residence, extraordinarily

dinarily made for Innocence, be in as wonderful a manner removed, or accommodated to a State of Guilt? This is no more, than what has since often happened, when a fruitful Land was made barren, for the Wickedness of them that dwelt therein. I can as easily believe the Reality of Paradise, though modern Geographers cannot find the Ruins of it, as I can the Existence of *Adam*, though modern Travellers are not agreed about the Place of his Tomb. The Garden in question was the Belief of the whole *Jewish* Church, and is accordingly alluded to and mentioned throughout their Scriptures: Its Name of *Eden* is communicated to all places bearing Resemblance to it in Fruitfulness and Pleasure: And its Destruction, or at least the Possibility of it, is intimated in that Passage, where a fruitful Land is described as the Garden of *Eden* before a consuming Fire, and like a desolate Wilderness after it.

Of the Personages concerned in this Transaction, there lie no Difficulties, no Objections, except against One, namely, the speaking reasoning Serpent: Difficulties, arising from the Shortness of the Narration, and Inattention to the Nature and Progress of Language:

Objections too trivial to be able to strike this Passage out of the Catalogue of historical Facts.

A Serpent speaks: strange Absurdity! *Eve* must know, that Speech was not the Privilege of Brutes; yet she is not surprized at it: Stranger still! But how does the Examiner know all this? He conjectures: he derides the Fancies of others, applauds his own. *Eve* might not have that perfect Knowledge of the inferior Creatures, as is pretended: If she had, Terror and Surprize are not very apt to arise in a State of Innocence and Security. *Eve* might be surprized; and yet the Author omits to mention it in his short Account. The like happened in the Case of the expostulating Ass, reproving with Man's Voice the Madness of the Prophet, as it is recorded by the same Writer. *Balaam* knew very well, that this was an extraordinary Thing, and that Asses by Nature did not speak: Yet he shews no Alarm at it, and expresses no Passion, that we read of, besides Resentment for the Disobedience of his Beast.

But the Difficulty with the Wonder increases:

creases : A Serpent not only speaks, but reasons ; and that, upon the highest Subjects ; God, his Command, the Consequences of Disobedience. This indeed may naturally lead us, as perhaps it did *Eve*, to imagine some Intelligence was concealed under this Representation : A good one it could not be, because it persuaded Disobedience to God : It remains therefore that it was an evil one ; the Evil One, the afterwards known Enemy of God and Man. Whether the first Pair were acquainted with the Existence and Designs of such a Being, we are not told : neither can we infer the Necessity of such previous Information. We are elsewhere told that God made Man perfect, and left him in the Hands of his own Counsel : How in these Circumstances, in the greatest Perfection of his Nature, guarded by continual Intercourse with Heaven and its Inhabitants, he should sin without a Tempter of an extraordinary Kind, is scarce conceivable. If the Tempter was necessary on this Occasion, he must put on some Shape or other, in order to be visible, and hold Discourse. Nor could this appear strange to the Inhabitants of Paradise, who could not see and converse with God but under some sensible Exhibition of himself, by Angels, or

that great Angel of the Covenant, who perhaps was the Person, the Lord, who appeared to *Abraham* in the Form of a Man, and talked with him, while the other two Angels went forward to execute their Commission on *Sodom*. If the evil Spirit must necessarily assume some Shape; why not that of a Serpent, as well as any other? He might chuse it preferably to others, on account of its natural Subtilty and insinuating Behaviour: If he chose the Form of the shining Species of Serpents, agreeably to the Conjecture of some learned Men, he might do it, to imitate the glistering Appearance of good Spirits, and so more effectually deceive an innocent unexperienced Woman, aware of no Mischief from so fair and familiar an Object. And I know not, whether this may not be referred to in that Passage, where it is observed, that Satan himself is sometimes transformed into an Angel of Light,

The Curse of the Serpent, in Token and Memory of this Transaction, seems to declare for the Tempter's Appearance in the Shape of this Creature: But since a speaking Serpent gives so much Offence, let us admit his Exhibition, under any less surprizing and
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suspicious Form: And yet the Narrative of *Moses* will be no less strictly true and historical, even where he declares, that the Serpent said this or that. The first Language, in all Probability, was a Portraiture of Things, like that of the *Americans* at their first Discovery by the *Spaniards*: first they pointed to them present, and then drew their Figures, when absent. A Ship, a Horse, a Serpent, were expressed, not by Words, but by Pictures of them; and the first Letters and Characters were nothing else, but Abbreviations of such Pictures. The same Images or Portraits expressed abstract Ideas also, agreeably to the Qualities, discerned in the different Beings of Nature. Thus the Figure of a Stag might express Swiftnes; of a Bull, Strength; of a Serpent, Subtilty and Deceit. It is certain, that in the time of *Moses*, the last of these Ideas was fixed and in Use; and the cunning or insidious Person was marked out by the Idea of a Serpent, as appears in the Instance of *Dan* called by this Name, from his Actions and Behaviour. In the Language then of *Moses*, and those of his Age,—*The Serpent said to Eve*—means no more—than the cunning One, the insidious Author of the Ruin of our Species, said to *Eve*.

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But the Examiner seems, at all other Times, as well as this, very shy of admitting the Devil into the Affairs of the World; and indeed I know not, whether he admits his Desire and Power of Mischief, or even allows of his very Existence. And as some have affected to make and govern Worlds, without a Creator, by the natural Powers of Matter; so our Author will account for the Introduction of moral Evil, without a Tempter, even in a State of Innocence and Perfection; a greater Difficulty with me to the Understanding, than any he has discovered in the History of the Fall. He says, Sinning without a Tempter, is the natural Method, attested by the Account of it given by an Apostle, where he says——Every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away and enticed by his own Lust; and that Lust, when it has conceived, bringeth forth Sin; and Sin, when it is accomplished, bringeth forth Death. Here is indeed the natural Generation and Issue of Sin, by it's Mother's Side, which is Lust and Concupiscence: But there wants another Agent, at least as to the Beginning of Sin; the Tempter is always through the Scripture represented as the Author and Parent of Sin,

Sin, the first Mover and Suggester of Evil : And all Sins are called those Works of the Devil, which the Saviour came to destroy. The Graces of the Spirit are mentioned, in like Manner, as productive of one another, as our own, in many Places: And yet in others, they are referred to the Agency of that divine Being, without whom we cannot think or do one good Thing. This therefore is, not to quote and interpret Scripture, but to pervert and abuse it. It is, to set Apostles at Variance with themselves, and with one another, who every where guard against the Wiles of Satan, and suffer us not to be ignorant of his Devices: Who declare him the personal Tempter of our Master, who suffered the Temptation, that he might be in all Things like us, Sin only excepted, and might know how to succour them who are under Temptation, in that he himself was also tempted. In the Field of the World, which could not but come good from the Hands of God, there appeared a Mixture of Bad and Good, Virtue and Vice, religious and wicked Men: If you ask, who thus defaced Things, originally good? the Saviour answers, an Enemy hath done this. This Enemy was the Devil, who practised upon Mankind

kind as early, as the Beginning of the World, as the same divine Person assures us by St. *John*, where speaking to the *Jews*, he says, *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do*: He was a Murderer from the Beginning; that is, according to Scripture Language, from that Beginning, in which God created the Heavens, the Earth, and Man: He then introduced Sin and Death by an insidious Lye, when he said, *Ye shall not surely die*: He abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him: The first Lye was his: When he speaketh a Lye, he speaketh of his own; for he is a Liar, and the Father of it. We are therefore divinely warranted to introduce this evil Being, as the Author of Sin in all the Ages of the World, and of that fatal original Sin, which took Place in the very Beginning of it.

Notwithstanding that our Author, distressed by the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, finds himself obliged at last to acknowledge, that there is a wicked invisible Spirit subsisting in the World, who, by the Agency of his Children, or corrupt Seed, makes it his Business to obstruct the Progress

gress of the Gospel: Yet he is disposed to dispute every Inch of Ground, and admit him, as late as possible, at the Time of the Gospel: leaving the Tares, which sprung up before this Period, to spring of themselves, without an Enemy: And ventures to say, "how that wicked One was himself introduced, and how he became endued with a Nature and Power utterly opposite and hostile to the Divine Nature, is a Mystery, not yet revealed to us, either by the Old or the New Testament." But if Christ asserts such a Fact, we must believe it, tho' we cannot account for the Time, or precise Manner of it. And if such a wicked Spirit really was introduced, or introduced himself, this may as well be conceived to have happened early, as late: at least, as early as the first Notices of the Gospel Dispensation, and that was many Ages before Christ, and as far back as the Creation. But are the Scriptures, Old and New, entirely silent on this Head? Nothing less. When the 70 Disciples returned with Joy, saying, even the Devils are subject to us through thy Name: That Word, who was in the Beginning with God, by whom also he made the Worlds, the beloved Son in the Bosom of the Father, Partner of his

his Counsels, and the Executor of them, said unto them—I beheld Satan, as Lightning, fall from Heaven. Many Companions, and once Inhabitants of Heaven, fell with him: For, as St. *Jude* speaks, the Angels, which kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation, God hath reserved in everlasting Chains under Darkness, to the Judgment of the Great Day. This Event did not happen in the Time of Christ on Earth: He saw the Fall of the Arch-enemy of God and Man, not in this System, but before it. The *Jewish* Church was acquainted with this Transaction, and the Manner and Cause of it too, long before the Christian *Æra*: And *Isaiab* refers to it, as a known Piece of History, and borrows from it the lofty Images in his Description of the Greatness, Pride, and Desolation of the King of *Babylon*——

“ How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning! For thou hast
 “ said in thine Heart I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the
 “ Stars of God: I will ascend above the
 “ Heights of the Clouds, I will be like the
 “ most High: Yet thou shalt be brought
 “ down to Hell.”——Are we then at a Loss to account for the Malice of so proud a Rebel

bel against God? Or his Despite to the new Creation, formed perhaps for his Confusion, and built on his Ruins? Is it Matter of Wonder, that a Spirit, who envied the Happiness of superior Stars in the Regions of Glory, and aimed at Divinity itself, should madly oppose the Measures of the Deity in lower Regions, and endeavour by all Arts to corrupt and spoil, what he could not prevent, and yet could not behold with Patience? Where can we more reasonably look for the Tempter than here in Paradise? Where more certainly discern him?

We may trace his Footsteps in the very Temptation itself, which appears exactly expressive of his aspiring Genius:—In the Day ye eat, ye shall not surely die; ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil. The Artifice and Lye, which had been before successful with Beings of greater Exaltation, and swept Legions from Heaven, was naturally imposed upon Creatures, Strangers to Lust, and every low vicious Inclination, and accessible perhaps only on the Side of an eager Ambition of increasing their Knowledge, and raising their Condition. Thus decisive is Scripture in the Point of the Tempter, of his

his Condition and Temper, his Delight in opposing God and Goodness, his being the very Murderer and Liar of Paradise. And he is not only set forth, as the Author of the first Transgression, the Parent of the first Lye, but is also, as the Bishop has justly observed, spoke of and alluded to, throughout the whole Bible, in the *Mosaic* Language of the Serpent, marking either his Nature or assumed Shape; and the Serpent, who speaks to *Eve* in *Genesis*, is the old Serpent in the *Revelation*, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole World.

Agreably to the destined Victory, very early predicted, of the Saviour over this Serpent, who is the Devil, the Tempter in the Wilderness, alarmed at some Prognostics and Signs of his Destroyer, but not yet certain of the Condition of Christ, endeavours to discover it by the Application of a Prophecy, where he is spoken of in Terms of the Paradisiacal Curse, of bruising the Serpent's Head, trampling under his Feet the Adder and Dragon, as the Bishop has not less justly than curiously observed; and as the Apostle to the *Romans* tells the Believers of his Time, that the God of Peace shall shortly bruise Satan under

under their Feet. But here we are stopped by an Insinuation of the Examiner, that the whole Narrative of Christ's Temptation might be only a Dream, as the Transaction in Paradise was a Fable: And *Grotius* is brought in to intimate, what he sets himself to confute, the Notions, Conceits and Fancies of some odd People, against Reason, against Scripture. Upon this our Author advances a Step farther, and grows very shrewd in the next Observation, that how probable soever his Lordship may take his Conceit of Satan's Ignorance of Christ to be, it is utterly confuted in the Gospels, which every where make the Devils proclaim the Quality and Errand of Christ. He goes on to flourish and triumph—How could the Prince and Leader be ignorant of what every inferior Devil, and even a Legion of them knew? Was he not acquainted with the Scriptures, which pointed him out by a Series of Prophecy through all Ages? He was; and therefore grew terribly apprehensive, that *Jesus* might be the Person: Some extraordinary Things had attended his Birth and Baptism: He was therefore resolved to sift and try him to the uttermost, if possibly he might wind the Secret out of him, and be

no longer in Suspence. After indeed the further Progress of his Ministry, when the grand Enemy saw the Completion of Prophecies in the successive Passages of his Life, and groaned under his Power in his Miracles and Wonders, he had no Room for doubting; their own Bruises convinced and confounded him and his Associates, and they cry out, "we know thee who thou art, torment us not before our Time." From this Time forward they study to obstruct and defeat his Purposes, they stir up *Jew* and *Gentile* against him, they persuade *Judas* to betray, *Pilate* to condemn him; they literally bruise his Heel on the Cross, and in Rage fulfil the remaining Prophecies of their promised Destroyer. Thus consistent is Scripture with itself, thus consistent is the Bishop with Scripture; thus altogether inconsistent with both is the Examiner.

Nor is he less positive, or less mistaken, in the Point of the Agency of Spirits, in the Oracles of the Heathens. The Bishop had observed, and his Observation is supported by the Faith of all History sacred and prophane, that the Devil affected to give Oracles, and be adored under the Form of a Serpent, in
different

different Ages and Countries of the World, as it were in Triumph for the successful Cheat he put on Mankind, in the first Temptation he essayed in the Garden of *Eden*, under the Appearance, or, at least, in the Disposition and Imitation of that insidious Creature. The Examiner says, but he only says it; there is not a Word of Truth in the Fact, and therefore none in the Conjecture raised upon it. The Oracles, all the Oracles, were nothing but human Cheat, Imposture, and Priestcraft, and the Agency of Spirits was no Way concerned in the Idolatry of the heathen World. If you will not take his Word, you may that of *Fontenelle*, from whom he had it: And if you will not rest on this joint Security, you must be very incredulous, and a Slave to Systems. Monsieur *Fontenelle* writes in a very pretty Stile, and is, for ought I know to the contrary, a polite entertaining Companion, and has many Friends. All I have to say is, if you would learn *French*, read *Fontenelle* on Oracles: If you look for Argument and Truth, read the Author, who has long since confuted him, and exposed the Falseness of his Quotations, and the Weakness of his Reasonings from them. But we have still higher Authority than History, even

that of an Apostle, in Point asserting, that Spirits were concerned in this Matter, and that those Spirits were Devils: That the Worship of Idols of all Sorts, was the Worship of Fiends; that the Things, offered to Idols, were offered to Devils; and their Tables were the Tables of Devils: And thus, by deceitful Oracles and human Sacrifices, Satan continued his first Trade of Lying and Murder.

The Result of the whole is, if we consider the Nature and Consequences of the Transactions in Paradise, if the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are of any Meaning, any Force; if the universal Belief of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church is of any Weight; we must allow the Devil to have been the Agent in the first Temptation. This Agency obtained, the Difficulties of a speaking reasoning Brute vanish and disappear, and the History of the Fall stands as clear of Objections, as any other History in the Bible. And indeed I must do this Author the Justice, to observe, that he seems to pay as little Regard to the whole History of *Moses*, as to this particular Branch of it. What Thoughts he has given us Reason to entertain, concerning

ing the Credit he allows to the Inspiration of *Moses*, I will leave others to judge and say: But here he sarcastically says to *Moses*, in the Person of *Sanchoniatho*, that is, to *Moses*, setting aside his Inspiration, what was said by God to *Job*—Where wast thou when I laid the Foundation of the Earth? Declare, if thou hast Understanding, &c. and adds, *the whole, which the wisest could write on such a Subject, must be the mere Effect of Fancy and Invention.* For there were no Letters in those Days. What? not for near three thousand Years? The Story of *Setb's* Pillars, inscribed with Hieroglyphic Letters of Science, and preserved after the Flood, is in all Probability a Mistake in Part, or the Whole: But I think, we may gather from it the Opinion of the Antients to have been, that Letters were in Use in the Patriarchal and Ante-diluvian World. If there were no Letters, Tradition, he says, from so many Hands, through such a Length of Time, must be too precarious to be of Weight with inquisitive Men. From so many Hands? How many, I pray? *Methuselah* conversed Hundreds of Years with *Adam* and *Noah*: From the Flood to *Moses* are about eight Hundred Years; and the Son of *Noah* lived three Fourths of this Space of

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Time.

Time. Thus we see, how few Generations, and how few Hands, are sufficient to carry the Tradition from the first Man to *Moses*; and that the Lesson might be well learned and fixed by Persons, who lived so many Centuries together; especially, if their Worship and Religious Observances were founded upon it, which will hereafter be shown to be the Case. But to shut up this particular Debate, what Tradition could not ascertain, God did, if he directed the writing the History of Mankind. I introduced it only to shew, that the Creation of the World, and the Generations of Men, stand upon the same Foot of Credit with this Author, as the personal Conference between God, the Man, the Woman, and the Serpent in Paradise; that is, upon the Foot of mere Fancy and Invention. Upon the whole then, we have just as much Reason to exclude out of the Class of historical Writings all the other Accounts recorded before the Time of *Moses*, as the particular Narrative in Question; that is, we have none at all.

The Passage, thus freed from the Embarrassments thrown upon it by this Author, presents us with a clear, though general, Prophecy of a Victory to be obtained by some future
Seed

Seed of the Woman over this Enemy of God and Man, in Terms, metaphorical indeed, but not at all the less historical. The Heel of one Party, the Head of the other is to be bruised: Little unavailing Hurts are to be expected on one Side, total Destruction on the other. This general Hope is kept up, unfolded, and ascertained by Degrees, in all the succeeding Ages of the World: The Arts of the insidious Adversary are exposed and guarded, till the Saviour came, who accomplished the Prediction, as far as was consistent with a State of Probation: defeated his Machinations, restrained his Power, keeps him in Chains to the Judgment of the great Day, when he will compleat the Conquest, by thrusting him and his Associates into everlasting Perdition.

But the Mention of Doom's Day opens to the Examiner a new Door for Insult, not only on this Piece of Sacred History, but the whole Plan of the Christian Dispensation. He laughs at Rewards, Victories, and Crowns, in Reversion, not to take Place, till a Man is no more: And calls such Triumph poor Comfort to the Species, under all the Evils and Distresses, in which its Enemy the Devil has

involved it. The Redemption by Christ was foretold, and at last accomplished so far, as to give Mankind the Means of Grace, and Hopes of Glory and compleat Security in another World, at the Consummation of all Things. A Place at Christ's right Hand in his Kingdom, which he has told us is not of this World, but another Country, another City, not of this Building, eternal in the Heavens; is the Expectation, the Joy, the Consolation under all Evils and Distresses, to which the Christian Eye is pointed in the Gospel: This is the Comfort, which cannot fail, the Hope, which cannot make ashamed: This is the certain, though future, Reward and Encouragement, held forth to the Disciple of Jesus, who walks by Faith, and not by Sight, and knows, that he is faithful, who has promised. *Strange Comfort this*, says our Examiner, *to an Inhabitant of this World, which could not be felt or understood, till the World itself should be no more!* And yet strange as it may appear to this Gentleman, such is the Comfort offered all through the Sacred Writings, and it was both felt and understood by those, who received it. This was the Comfort offered to *Abraham*: He saw the distant Blessing, obeyed, and was glad. The noble Army

Army of antient Worthies had no Comfort, but this, to support them under Tortures and Death: They died in Faith of these Prospects of future Triumph and Glory: They received not the Promises; yet by Faith, Foretast, and Joy in them, they would not accept Deliverance; plainly declaring, they sought not a present Country, but another heavenly Region, and the Happiness, which God has prepared for them that love him.

Our Author has certainly pushed his Philosophic Liberty a good Way in this Paragraph: but in the next, it runs riot into all the Lengths of Libertinism. " Since the
 " Bishop, he says, has referred us, after all,
 " for the Completion of this Prophecy, to
 " the Day of Judgment; I shall willingly
 " adjourn all farther Disputes about it to the
 " same Day. It is that Day alone, which
 " can determine the real Character, not only
 " of this, but of all other *pretended* Prophe-
 " cies, Inspirations, and Revelations of the
 " Will of God; which now chiefly occupy
 " the Attention, and constitute the Religion
 " of all the Nations upon Earth. And
 " happy would it be for them all, if drop-
 " ping these vain Contests and Wranglings
 " about

"about Questions, wholly speculative, fruit-
 "less, and inexplicable, and remitting the
 "Decision of them to that last and awful
 "Day; Men would apply their Pains and
 "Zeal, to promote and inculcate those prac-
 "tical, social and real Duties, which our
 "Reason and Senses prescribe in common to
 "all, as the chief Good of our Nature, the
 "Foundation of all Religion, the Source of
 "all our Happiness in this Life, and of all
 "our Hopes in that which is to come."

The Comment on this extraordinary Para-
 graph needs not to be strained, in Order to
 show the manifest Nature and Tendency of
 it. The Direction of Christ is, to search the
 Scriptures for Prophecies concerning him;
 of the Apostles, to contend earnestly for the
 Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints.
 Impertinent Direction! vain Contention! about
 uncertain, fruitless, inexplicable Things! No;
 employ your Search to better Purpose, to
 those social and real Duties, which our Rea-
 son and Senses prescribe in common to all.
 Prophecies, Inspirations, and Revelations,
 are pretended to on all Sides: The Turks
 have their Prophet, as well as the Christians:
 "To look for any useful Truth in these
 " Things,

“ Things, to study Prophecies, to pay Re-
 “ gard to Revelations, is to turn our Atten-
 “ tion from the Nature of Things, and the
 “ Testimony of plain Facts, and apply it to
 “ the Investigation of Mysteries, Prophecies,
 “ Types, Shadows, or every Thing, which
 “ God has thought proper to hide, instead
 “ of revealing to us: It is an Employment,
 “ like the vain Amusements of those simple
 “ People, who please themselves with look-
 “ ing up to the Heavens, not to contemplate
 “ the real Beauty, Order, and Motions of
 “ the heavenly Bodies, but to spy Monsters
 “ in the Clouds, or the typical Figures of
 “ Mountains, Castles, Beasts and Men; the
 “ Creatures not of God, but of their own
 “ Imagination”. Christ and his Apostles
 every where argue from these Types, Figures,
 Prophecies, and such fanciful childish Things,
 and make a right Faith the Foundation of a
 right Practice, and a main Ingredient in the
 Hope of the Christian Salvation, to be had
 only by Faith in its Author, that Faith, which
 is raised and built on the Investigation of these
 silly, fruitless, inexplicable Things. No:
 Remit all this needless Inquiry. whether this
 or that Revelation be true or false, to the great
 and awful Day, and attend only to the doing
 and

and inculcating those Things, *which our Reason and Senses prescribe in common to all, as the chief Good of our Nature*: the first Law of which, as he tells us elsewhere, is to propagate our Species; and the next, I suppose, to eat, drink, and be merry and social; for this also the Senses will lead to. Any instituted Religion has its Difficulties, its Disputes; but this Scheme has none, and supercedes Abundance of Labour and Wrangling: These Duties are the chief Good of our Nature; about Goods in Reversion let the Day of Judgment decide. *Quid sit futurum cras, fuge querere.*

But notwithstanding all this fine Raillery on the Explainers of Types, the Builders of Castles in the Air, or the Beholders of Pictures in the Fire; having considered, and, I hope, vindicated this first literal Prophecy of the Redeemer of Mankind, the Conqueror of Sin and Death, and of the Author of both; I proceed to consider and vindicate a Prophecy of another Kind, and pretty near of the same Antiquity; I mean that, exhibited to us in the Sacrifice and Offering of *Cain and Abel*. For Actions can teach as clearly and strongly, as Words; Nay, Actions were the first Language,

guage, and Things the first Letters. The Prophets all through the Bible, deliver their Messages by such Signs, as well as Words. *Abraham's* intended Sacrifice was an Image of the Sacrifice on the Cross, and the Parent of the promised Seed was received from Death by his Father in a Figure, or sensible Representation of the Resurrection of the Saviour from the Bands of the Grave, by which it was impossible he should be held. The whole ceremonial Law was a Collection of Ordinances, Institutions, Actions, Descriptions, and Histories, all figurative of Christ, the Intention of his Life, the Manner and End of his Death; and all without Sense, without Efficacy, considered out of this relative View; which Christ and his Apostles argue from as frequently, and as forcibly, as from any literal Passages in the Bible; and acquaint us, that the whole Law was a School-master, who, by these prophetic Elements, leads us to Christ. It is not then visionary, to look upon the first Instance of Sacrifice in the same View, and to think, it may as justly exhibit the Manner of effecting our Salvation, as all the succeeding ones assuredly did. I beg the Examiner's Pardon for still supposing, notwithstanding all his Objections

to and Denial of it, that *Moses* is a true Historian, and has given us, in this Narrative of the two Brothers, a Fact, which we may rely upon. Let us then proceed, to consider the Narrative, under all the Lights, which Reason and Scripture, and the several Parts of the Account itself, conspire to throw upon it.

A Piece of religious Service is attempted by two Brothers, and related, after the Mention of their Birth and Employments. In Process of time it came to pass, that *Cain* brought of the Fruit of the Ground, an Offering unto the Lord: and *Abel*, he also brought of the Firstlings of his Flocks, and of the Fat thereof. Here the first Inquiry naturally rises, concerning the Origin of this Service: It could not well be by Chance; it must be therefore, either from the Direction of Nature, or the Appointment of God. The Examiner declares for the former, and calls in the Opinion of *Spencer*, in Support of his own. But such Authority weighs nothing in this Affair; especially, against Authority of a much higher Nature. Nor is this the single Error of that great Man, whose whole Hypothesis has more of Novelty, than Truth,

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and

and whose much Learning has been prostituted to the Maintenance of mere Fancies. The Text is before us; the Sense of all the Scripture upon the Subject lies open to us; Reason is the common Privilege of Mankind, and must, under these Guides, determine the Point. To proceed then—The Voice of Nature might direct to Gratitude; for Gratitude is certainly a natural Duty. But this is nothing to the Purpose: The Question is not, whether Nature would direct Men to Gratitude to the Maker and Giver of all good Things; but whether she would point out such Methods of expressing that Gratitude; And the Difficulty is to conceive, how it should enter into the Heads of these Men, that they should please God, by offering to him Fruits and Animals. Offer to God the Fruit of the Ground? Wherefore? What Reason for it? Is the great spiritual Lord of the Universe like a Man, who wants Bread to strengthen, Wine to make glad his Heart, and Oil to make him a cheerful Countenance? Or is he like Sovereigns on Earth, to be courted, to be bribed, by Presents and Gifts? The Voice of Reason could never speak this Language; never direct a Service, which, without some particular View,

View, and Appointment, must be foppish and unmeaning, or derogatory from the Majesty of God, and destructive of common Sense. But the Absurdity is much more shocking, in the other Offering of a slaughtered Animal. What? Please the Creator, by butchering and mangling his Creatures? and at a Time, when no Authority to kill was indulged; when Flesh does not appear to have made a Part of human Diet; when Dominion and Sovereignty were indeed granted to Man, but not Tyranny and Usurpation on the natural Rights and Lives of his Fellow-Creatures? Reason, on this occasion, would certainly recoil, and, borrowing the Person and Words of God in the Psalmist, say—
 “ Every Beast of the Forest is mine, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills: If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the World is mine and the Fulness thereof: Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? No: express your Gratitude to me in quite another Way: Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High, and call upon me in the Day of Trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”
 Bloody Sacrifice then was not, could not be the Impulse of Nature, or the Result of unassisted

assisted Reason : Nature would abhor it, Reason would dissuade it : It was therefore the positive Institution and Appointment of God, as an Act of religious Worship for the antediluvian World, continued by the Patriarch who survived the Deluge, and afterwards in succeeding Ages settled, with all its Ceremonies and References to the great Propitiation by Blood on the Cross. It is quite analagous, that He, who by the Sacrifices and Rites of the *Mosaic* Law led Men, after the Flood, to the Faith and Expectation of a dying Redeemer and Saviour ; should by the like Method point the Eye, and upon the same Foundation raise the Hopes and Faith of the first Men, towards that important Salvation and the Manner of it, in which they had as great an Interest, as any of the following Generations. It is natural therefore to think, that with the Appointment of Sacrifice, some View, general or particular, of its Destination and Meaning was opened to the first Worshippers in this Way, in order to make it a reasonable Service. And, if the Observation of a late learned and ingenious Writer may be allowed, as I think it ought in all Reason to be ; the Text of the Narrative itself gives Countenance and Reality to this

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Conjecture.

Conjecture. For in the Conversation between God and *Cain*, on the Rejection of his Offering, God tells him, if he had done well, he should have been accepted; and if he had done otherwise than well, he should repent and do better for the future, and reconcile himself to his Maker, by the appointed Method of a Sin-Offering, which was at the Door, and easy to be had. *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, Sin, or a Sin-Offering, lieth at the Door:* Agreeably to the Usage of the *Jewish* Tongue, which by the same Word expresses Sin, and the Atonement of it: And such a Way of speaking is not infrequent in all Languages. And thus will stand confuted the confident Assertion of the Examiner, that the Text itself yields not the least Intimation, concerning Christ, or a Redeemer of Mankind, nor a single Word about the Use, Intent, or Duty of sacrificing.

The next Particular in this History, is the different Treatment of the two Offerers, the Acceptance of one, and the Rejection of the other. How this Acceptance was discovered, is uncertain; the Text has not told us: But if we should say by Fire from
 I Heaven,

Heaven, agreeably to attested Facts in after Ages, as some learned Men have conjectured; a sorry Joke, fetched from the Reveries of Rabbinical Traditions, of the Face of a Lion appearing in this celestial Flame, will not weaken or discredit the Conjecture. But be that as it will; I am not concerned in the Success of this Conjecture, and am contented with some Mark of Acceptance or other, agreeably to the sacred Text in the Place: and so proceed to search the probable Reason of the Preference given in the Case before us, as far as the Scriptures will guide me to find it. And here I think myself warranted to say, that the different Treatment of the two Brothers by God flowed, both from the different Nature of the Offerings, and of the Men. One had accompanied his Offering with right Dispositions, the other with wrong ones. If we could certainly learn, what was the recommendatory Disposition of *Abel*, we might with like Certainty find out the Disqualification of the other; and from both perhaps, the Preference arising from the Nature of the two Offerings. But we do certainly know, what was the Disposition and peculiar Virtue, which pleased in *Abel*: For the Apostle tells

—By Faith *Abel* offered unto God a more excellent Sacrifice than *Cain*, by which he obtained Witness, that he was righteous, God testifying of his Gifts. But Faith, is Faith in something, in the Truth of some Promise, the Efficacy of some divine Appointment. Let the Apostle explain himself in the Account, he presently after gives of the Faith of *Abraham*, to which our Saviour himself bears divine Testimony. By Faith *Abraham*, when he was tried, offered up *Isaac*: And he, that had received the Promises, offered up his only begotten Son; of whom it was said, that in *Isaac* shall thy Seed, which is Christ by the Interpretation of an Apostle, be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the Dead; from whence also he received him in a Figure, or Representation of what was afterwards to happen in the Person of Christ. The Faith then of *Abel* was a Faith in God's Promise of a future Saviour; and the Matter of his Offering proves a Trust in the Appointment of God for the Remission of Sin, whether he saw distinctly, or not, the Reference of it to that Lamb, who was slain, in the Destination of God, in its salutary Effects, and as it were in Effigy in this first accepted

cepted Sacrifice of *Abel*, and therefore is said to be slain from the Foundation of the World. The Disqualification then of *Cain*, was the Want of such salutary Faith, and his Non-compliance with the Appointment of that Worship, which was expressive of it. Thus the Account, here given of this early Transaction, stands supported by the Circumstances and Words of the Text itself, and the Analogy and express Testimony of the later Scriptures. And the Sum of the whole is, that the Excellence and Success of *Abel's* Offering arose from the Faith of the Offerer in the Promises of God; the Promises of God concerning a future Saviour and Deliverer; and also from his Obedience to that divine Appointment and Institution, which was to exemplify and set forth to the Patriarchs, as such Sacrifices afterwards did to the *Jews*, an Atonement by Blood, to be accomplished finally in the Person of Christ, who was wounded for our Transgressions, and made by his Blood a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. It is not therefore fanciful to assert, that in this antient Narrative we have a clear Prophecy, by Action and Exhibition, of that great, future, and interesting Event: But on the contrary, we

have the Concurrence of Reason and Testimony, to maintain and make good the Assertion.

The Bishop placed at the Head of his Discourses a Text of *St. Peter*, and rescued it from the impertinent and wicked Use made of it by the Freethinking Author he had in View. The Examiner takes Fire at this Treatment of his Friend, ranges himself on his Side, applauds his ignorant Insult on the Application of some Passages in the Evangelists, denies some Prophecies, laughs at all, rejects the strong Evidence of them arising from their Extent and Connection, divides, ridicules them; and asserts them, thus traduced and weakened, to be, each by itself, the only Support and Proof of the Mission of *JESUS*, and brings the Text in Question, to countenance and maintain his Assertion. In the Prosecution of this Argument, he gives such an Interpretation and Detail of the two Epistles of *St. Peter*, as quite disfigure and disguise the Apostle, offend against all the Rules of Criticism, Analogy, and Agreement of one Part of Scripture with another, or of any one with itself; and he might, with more Innocence, have been employed

employed in tracing visionary Scenes and Imagery in the Clouds, than in these unjointed Reveries, these wild Natives of a disordered Brain. The unbelieving Author above-mentioned, resolving to set Scripture at Variance with Scripture, in order to weaken first, and then destroy it all; wanted a Text to support against Miracles the Party of Prophecies, themselves afterwards to be divided from each other, and to be attacked under these little Divisions and Detachments, that so one by one might become an easier Conquest, which united could afford no Hope of succeeding by Stratagem or Force. The Text, chosen for the former Part of this Design, was that of St. Peter 2 Ep. i. 19. *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take Heed, as unto a Light, that shineth in a dark Place; until the Day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your Hearts.*

It is agreed on all Hands, that Prophecy here, whatever is to be understood by that Word, is preferred, in Point of Evidence, to some other Thing; which Thing appears, from the Context in the three preceding Verses, to be the Transfiguration of Christ on

the Mount, with all the wonderful Circumstances of it. The Evidence then being out of Controversy, as well as the Preference of one to the other; let us proceed to what is not; that is, the Point to be proved by such Evidence. And that is asserted on one Side, to be the Mission or Messiahship of Christ; on the other, a particular Event, that of his coming in Power and Glory, to rescue his faithful Servants, and execute Vengeance on the impenitent obstinate *Jews*. If we can learn the Design and Purpose of the Transfiguration, we shall learn at the same Time the Extent and Purpose of the Prophecy in the Passage before us: For they certainly both belong to the same Subject. And for this Information we most properly apply to the Evangelist, the professed Historian of this Transaction. The Account is introduced by a previous Discourse of JESUS with his Disciples, about his Rejection by the Elders, chief Priests and Scribes, his Death and Resurrection. He gives Instructions, proper to the persecuted State of the Followers of a crucified Master. If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross daily, and follow me. And to determine you to this Conduct, I assure you, that whosoever will

will save his Life, shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his Life for my Sake, the same shall save it. For whosoever, startled at present Difficulties, and faithless of the future great Deliverance, shall be ashamed of me and of my Words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own Glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy Angels. And the Time of this glorious Event shall be during the Life-time of some of the Hearers: I tell you of a Truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of Death, till they see the Kingdom of God. The very Tokens and Times of this great Event are marked out in another Conversation with his Disciples, on Sight of the Temple and its Buildings, whose utter Destruction he foretels. And to their Question—When shall these Things be, and what shall be the Sign of thy coming, and of the End of the World, or this Period of the Christian Age?—he says, Wars and Rumours of Wars shall be the fearful Forerunners: the *Roman* Armies shall begirt *Jerusalem*; the Eagles shall fly to the Carnage; the Abomination of Desolation shall stand in the holy Place; and because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold: But he, who shall endure unto

unto the End, the same shall be saved from this Destruction; agreeably to my former Assurance, that he, who ventures to give up his Life, rather than his Faith, shall save both. When these Things therefore begin to come to pass, let them, which be in *Judea*, flee into the Mountains. Immediately after the Tribulation of those Days, shall the Sun be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her Light, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heavens shall be shaken; agreeably to the prophetic Description of the Desolation of Cities and States in other Places. And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven; that Sign of the Messiah's Glory so often demanded of him in his Life-time, and deferred to the Time of his Resurrection from the Grave, as *Jonas* rose from the Belly of the Fish: And then shall all the Tribes of the Earth, or *Land*, mourn: and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory: And then shall follow the Victory of the Saints, and the universal Establishment of his Church: He shall send his Angels with a great Sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from one End of Heaven to the

the other: And to shew, he is speaking of the same Events here, as at the Time of his Transfiguration, he fixes the Accomplishment of all these Things to the same Point of Time: This Generation shall not pass, till all these Things be fulfilled. The Subject then of this Discourse, and of the Particulars of the Transfiguration before, appears entirely one and the same. Nay, the Evangelist tells us positively, it was: For eight Days after his first Conversation above related, Jesus took *Peter, John and James*, and went up into a Mountain to pray; and as he prayed, the Fashion of his Countenance was altered, and his Raiment was white and glistering: And behold there talked with him two Men, which were *Moses and Elias*; who appeared in Glory, and spake of his Decease, which he should accomplish at *Jerusalem*: And, no doubt, of his consequent Glory, of which this was some Exemplification and Exhibition, and of which he had just before discoursed to his Disciples, and to which a Voice from Heaven directed them to attend, saying, this is my beloved Son, hear him. This Event was to take Place after his Resurrection, and therefore the Disciples were forbid to mention what they had seen and heard, till
after

after that Time. It is then quite agreeable to all the allowed Rules of judging and interpreting, to think, that when *St. Peter*, who was Eye-witness of this Glory, introduces this Transaction in his Epistle, he applies it to the same Subject, the single Point of Christ's Exaltation and Triumph, in the Destruction of his inveterate Enemies, and Establishment of his faithful Friends; and that the Object of the Prophecy, and the Glorification, was one and the same; the same with that mentioned in the Evangelists; not his general Mission and Messiahship, but this particular Display of his Greatness and Goodness.

From this State of the Case, the two Epistles receive Consistence and Unity of Design, and all the Passages, from the Beginning to the End of them, explain and prove it.

* The Apostolical Epistles were not written at random, but upon particular Occasions which called for them; and those particular Occasions are marked out in the several Epistles, and constantly kept in View: And the true Way of opening their precise Meaning is, to find out that Key to unlock it. Epistles
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* *Mr. Locke* says, that they, who think the Apostles to be loose Writers, are themselves loose Readers.

to particular Churches bore the Name of those, they were addressed to: Those not so directed, were called Catholic, or General: Not from the Universality or Generality of their Subject, but of the Persons they were sent to. We must search therefore for the Occasion and Subject of them, from the Persons, Times, and other concurring Circumstances. For though general Instructions and Reasonings are scattered up and down in all the Epistles, yet there is some one particular Point, or more, which are as it were the Master Features of the Piece, thrust themselves forward to Sight, and often give a determinate Likeness to Passages, otherwise general and not to be distinguished.

The Persons here were the Strangers, scattered throughout *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia* and *Bithynia*, by the Persecution of the *Jews*, who insulted them, as they before did their Master—If God will have him, let him deliver him. With these joined those of the *Gnostic* Heresy, who made their Profession of Christianity consistent with Lewdness, by following all Manner of Lusts; and with Safety, by denying their Name, when it brought them into Danger. These united
with

with the *Jews* in Persecution, and taunt at Promises of future Deliverance. These *St. Peter* sets himself particularly against: These and their Profelytes our Saviour spoke of, as the Forerunners of the great Day of Vengeance: *Through the abounding of Iniquity, the Love of many shall wax cold, many Seducers shall arise:* And this accordingly was so sure a Prognostic, that *St. Paul* says, this Day of Christ cannot come, unless this falling away come first. Agreeably, *St. Peter* says, this second Epistle I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure Minds by Way of Remembrance of the Words spoken before by the holy Prophets, and the Commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, as a fixed Token and preceding Sign of these last Days, in which Christ is to appear; *that there shall come Scoffers, walking after their own Lusts, and saying, where is the Promise of his coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all Things continue as they were from the Beginning of the Creation.*—*The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, but is Long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish.*—*But the Day of the Lord will come, as a Thief in the Night;*

Night; when the Heavens shall pass away with great Noise; when Fire and Sword shall desolate the Land. Nevertheless, according to his Promise, we look for new Heavens and new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness; a new State of Things, a new Face of religion. Wherefore, Beloved, seeing that ye look for such Things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot and blameless; and account the Long-suffering of our Lord to be Salvation, even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his Epistles speaking in them of these Things, &c. To raise then the drooping Spirits of the Christian Proselytes, persecuted, and derided in the different Parts of their Dispersion, with the Hopes of a promised Deliverance; to account for the Delay of it, and shew the Mockery of these Scoffers to be a certain Argument of its speedy Approach; is plainly the Design of the Apostle in this Place: And all the Præcepts, Directions, Exhortations and Remembrances, in both Epistles, have a direct Reference to it, and receive great Light and Beauty from it. He begins with saying to them, *You are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation;*

tion; that Salvation, which was ready to be revealed in the last Time: Wherein ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a Season ye are in Heaviness, through manifold Temptations; that the Trial of your Faith may be found to Praise, Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST. The Prophets have foretold this Salvation, and enquired diligently, what manner of Time the Spirit of Christ in them signified, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow. Wherefore be comforted, gird up the Loins of your Mind, be sober, and hope to the End, for the Grace and Deliverance, that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, who will come shortly. Ye are built on Christ, the chief Corner-Stone, to you precious; to those, who reject and disallow him, a Stone of Stumbling and Rock of Offence. Particularly abstain from fleshly Lusts, the Reproach of them, who would seduce you: Observe all the Duties of Submission to Governors, and Relations to one another: Let no Provocation make you forfeit your Patience or Obedience: You have bid adieu to all those lusts, wherein they think it strange, that ye run not with them to the same Excess of Riot; speaking evil of you, of which they shall

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shortly

shortly give an Account: But the End of all Things is at hand: The great Day of Vengeance and Deliverance approaches, is near: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer.

The second Epistle goes on to recommend those particular Graces and Virtues, which receive a peculiar Energy and Propriety, from the Sufferings and Hopes of that Generation. Believe the Promises; *Add to your Faith Virtue*; that is, not Virtue in general, for then there had been no Occasion to recommend particular Graces afterwards; but that peculiar Virtue, which best suits your present Situation, *Fortitude*; *to Fortitude Knowledge*, of Prophecies and Mysteries; *and to Knowledge Temperance*, lest that Day come upon you unawares; *and to Temperance Patience*, under your present Afflictions; *and to Patience Godliness*; not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together for the Service of God in these Times of Danger; *and to Godliness brotherly Kindness*; *and to brotherly Kindness Charity*; be kind to Friends, be charitable to your bitterest Enemies: *And thus ye shall be admitted into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour*, which begins in the Exertion of his

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Power.

Power in this Life, and shall be everlasting in the other. Therefore I will not be negligent to put you always in Remembrance of these Things, and to endeavour, that ye may be able, after my Decease, to have these Things always in remembrance, for your Support and Direction: for we have not cheated you with false Hopes of Deliverance: we scorn the Suggestion: We have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus, that is, his first coming adumbrated and discoursed of in the Mount, but were Eye-witnesses of his Majesty: For he received from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: And this Voice, which came from Heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount: we have also, for this Point, a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto, &c. Upon the whole, I think it evidently appears,

1st, That the Word of Prophecy and the Transaction on the Mount, are brought and compared together, as Evidences of one and the same Thing.

2dly,

2dly, That this Thing is not the Mission of Christ in general, but a particular future Event, to be accomplished, before that Generation should pass away: Especially since the three Disciples, who were Eye and Ear-witnesses of the glorious Appearance of the Mount, wanted no new Conviction, on the Head of the Mission of Jesus: but much wanted some Light concerning the sufferings and consequent Glory of their Master; as appears from *Peter's* Offence at the Mention of these Things, which was the Occasion of the Discourse preceding the Account of the Transfiguration, and of the Transfiguration itself, vouchsafed to him eight Days after.

3dly, That the Glory of Christ, not in the Day of Judgment, which was not to happen during this Generation, but in the Day of Vengeance on the *Jews*, the Day ready to be revealed, described by Christ himself, and by *St. Paul* in all his Epistles; was the precise Event, of which the Transfiguration was an Adumbration, a Prophecy by Action, as the more sure Word of Prophecy in the Text was some Prediction by Words.

4thly, I proceed to observe, that the Pro-

phesy, here compared with the Appearance
 on the Mount, may be that very circumstan-
 tial one, given by Christ himself, of this great
 Day, when he resumed this Subject with his
 Disciples, and marked out the Signs and Con-
 sequences of this Destruction and Delive-
 rance, and directed their Conduct before and
 at the Time of this astonishing Event; not-
 withstanding any thing, the Examiner has
 offered from the Context against it. And
 we may be the more inclined to this Opinion,
 if we attend nearly to some Things, which
 make it probable. After the very exact De-
 scription of the great Day, given by Christ,
 the Expectation of this Event was the Deri-
 sion of the Enemies, and Hope of the
 Friends of Christianity: The Apostles every
 where set themselves to enquire into this Mat-
 ter, it's Delay, its Approach, and to give
 Rules of Conduct agreeable to it: as appears,
 not only from *St. Peter*, but *St. Paul* also,
 in too many Places, to admit or want a parti-
 cular Mention. God set in the Church of
 those Days, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets:
 And these Prophets also enquired and searched
 into these Things, the great Subject of Inquiry
 and Concernment in that Age. *St. Peter* there-
 fore writes his second Epistle, and says, just
 before

before the Mention of the Scoffers at this Promise, he writes it, that they may be mindful of the Words, spoken before by the holy Prophets, and of the Commandment of the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour: speaking perhaps of Christian Prophets, as well as of Christian Apostles, in the same Sentence. And of the same Kind probably were the Prophets of the former Epistle, who searched diligently, and prophesied of the Grace that should come: searching what, or what manner of Time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow: Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister these Things, &c. All this may lead us to think, that the more sure Word of Prophecy in the Text may be Christian Prophecy, particularly that of JESUS, and may be compared here, not only with the Transfiguration, but ancient general Prophecy in this Affair: and then the Text will say, You have a Word of Prophecy for this Point, more sure; than any late Representation, or former Prediction: or absolutely thus—You have a more, or most sure Word of Prophecy.

It is true, the Apostle subjoins, as the Ground of his Regard for Prophecy in the Text, *That no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private Interpretation: For the Prophecy came not in old Time, by the Will of Man: but holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* Can it be imagined, the Apostle denies the same Direction of the Spirit to the Prophecies of Christ and Christians in the new Testament, which he asserts to the Prophets of the old? He says in general, that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of private Instigation, but the Dictate of the unerring Spirit: It was so of old; much more it is so now. The Expression indeed limits it to Prophecy of the *Scripture*, to Prophecy written, and received in authentic sacred Books: But many such Scriptures with their Prophecies, besides the *Jewish* Books, were received and allowed among Christians, and several Years before the Time of this Epistle. Three of the four Gospels, and most, if not all *St. Paul's* Epistles, were published, received, and read. The Author asserts indeed, " That it is a
 " Point allowed and indisputable, that where
 " ever the Writers of the new Testament speak
 " of the Scripture in general, or of the Pro-
 " phecies

“ pheties of the Scripture, they must be understood to speak only of the old Testament, and the Prophecies therein recorded.” But he has here hazarded a much more *crude Reflection*, than that he falsely imputed to his Lordship, since it certainly stands confuted by St. *Peter* himself in this very Epistle: where calling in the Authority of St. *Paul*’s Epistles in Support of the Point he was upon, he adds, in which Epistles are some Things hard to be understood, which they, that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also *the other Scriptures*, unto their own Destruction. The *other Scriptures* is a relative Phrase, and cannot have Place, without allowing St. *Paul*’s Writings to be Scriptures also.

But whether the Word of Prophecy in the Text is *Jewish*, or Christian, or both; it is, in Proof of the single Point proposed, justly preferred to the Transaction on the Mount, which, however awakening or convincing to the Eye-witnesses of the Majesty of their Master, was but a Representation or Beginning of the future Event signified and adumbrated by it, and therefore not so sure a Guide, at least to others, as those clear and circumstan-

tial Prophecies of it, which they had in their Hands. Such Prophecy marked out the Time and Tokens of this Event; was without Ambiguity or Possibility of Mistake: It was a Light shining on this dark, and then unpromising Expectation, sufficient to dispel their present Gloom of Fears and Distresses, and to guide them safely, if duly attended to, till it brightened into perfect Day by the happy Accomplishment; until that great Day of the Lord dawned, and the Day-Star, the immediate Forerunner of it, arose in their Hearts, and they saw with their Eyes, and understood with their Hearts, the Promise made good in its full Glory, and followed with all its happy Consequences of a new Heaven and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.

Unhappy then is the Choice of this Text of *St. Peter*, to set up antient Prophecy in Opposition to the Gospel Evidence of the Mission of *JESUS*, with which it evidently had nothing to do: And much more unhappy still is the Choice, if, as the learned Author of the Discourses has very judiciously observed, and I have endeavoured to prove, the Prophecy, here intended, is probably

the Prophecy of Christ, and consequently, itself a Gospel Evidence.

As to the general Question of the comparative Evidence of Prophecy and Miracles, for the Truth of Christianity; I cannot help observing in the first Place, that Comparisons, as they say, are odious, and I heartily wish, there had been no Occasion given for them, in the Point before us, by the Enemies to the Evidence of both. God has providentially and kindly given us the Assurance of our most concerning Interest in his Son, by the united Voice of the Prophetic and Historical Scripture, that no Ignorance, unless affected, might be pleaded, no unchosen Prejudice be unfurmounted; that those who had Eyes to see, might see, and those who had Ears to hear, might hear, and all who would be converted, might live. God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son, *JESUS of Nazareth*, a Man, as *St. Peter* speaks to the *Jews*, approved of God among them, by Miracles and Wonders and Signs, which God did by him in the midst of them: What therefore

fore God has allied and joined together, no Man should put asunder.

But if the Arts of the Enemies of Christianity will force us upon the Comparison, I see no Method of declining it. Nevertheless, though we separate this kindred Evidence into Parts, as we do large Objects for more distinct Vision; they will soon unite again, and make one beautiful Whole, for our Conviction and Admiration. For after all, Prophecy and Miracle are very near of Kin, have the same Parent, and the Likeness in Feature of such Offspring. In a Word, Prophecy is only a Species of Miracle, properly so called. For what is Miracle, but the extraordinary Exertion of some divine Attribute? And is not the Exertion of Knowledge too wonderful for us, which we cannot attain unto, a Miracle, as well as the Exertion of divine Power, in raising the Dead and controuling the Elements? The Dispute then is between Miracle and Miracle; and that, only with Relation to our Capacity and Apprehension of their Force and Evidence: For otherwise, it would be the silly, the impious Attempt, of setting one Attribute of God in Competition with another,

then, his Knowledge with his Power, in Proof of his Divinity.

The Difference between these two Species of Miracle is, that the one is discerned, as soon as done; the other not till some Time after: The one is sensible and striking, without Study or Search; the other is legible, and requires Pains, Application, and Ingenuity, to make it equally affecting: One was designed to give immediate Conviction of the Point in Question, the Mission of Jesus from Heaven; the other opens by Degrees, discovers itself in some Parts, studiously conceals itself in others: It gives enough Light to cheer and comfort, and answers all the Purposes of a Dispensation, raised upon Faith and Hope of a future Saviour, and designed to be accomplished, a long Time after, in Vision and Fact. The Prophet is sometimes not let into the Secret of his own Prediction: *Caiaphas* designed to persuade the Murder of Jesus; but, being High-Priest, was over-ruled by the Spirit of God to prophesy the Expediency of Christ dying for the People. A Prediction, dark in one Age, receives Light from the Vouchsafements to another; it was spoken at one Time,

Time, but for the Use of one that followed it: Prophecy is perhaps ambiguous and not well understood in this or that Passage, but is convincing and unanswerable upon the whole. The Distance between the Time of the Prediction and the Accomplishment, which creates the Wonder of any Prophecy, and the greater Distance the greater Wonder; yet makes some Difficulty in apprehending and applying it; and a Difficulty proportionable to that Distance: Since the older any written Prophecy is, the greater must be the Change of Language and Customs; and hence may arise Doubts and Mistakes, Cavil and Dispute, about this or that Prediction, its literal Meaning, its prophetic Intention. The Revelation of a Fact, either immediately done, or going to be so, is as convincing, as any other Kind of Miracle. No sooner had JESUS answered *Nathanael's* Question, how he knew him and his Character, e're he saw him, with—*Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast yet under the Fig-tree, I saw thee*—than the true *Israelite*, struck with Amazement at a Knowledge too wonderful for Man, cries out, *Tbou art the Son of God, Tbou art the King of Israel.* The Inferiority then of Prophecy, in Point
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of Evidence, to Miracle properly so called, does not lie in the Nature of the Things, but the Difference of Conveyance, and of the Manner of apprehending. The latter gives immediate sensible Proof; the former requires Time and Leisure, to accomplish and understand it: The one demands only the right Use of the Senses, whose Evidence none can deny, without running into the wretched Scepticism of denying all Proof of the Existence of the World, and of Him who made it; the other is often a Point of critical Skill, Letters, diligent Search and Comparison of Places. A Man may indeed continue unbelieving, notwithstanding the utmost, the plainest Evidence; he may allow the Fact, and not gather the right Consequence from it, blinded with Rage, Malice, Vice, and Prepossession: But no one could behold a boisterous Wind struck silent, and Mountains of Billows subside into a perfect Calm, in an Instant, at a Command; or the Dead of four Days rise and walk, at a Bidding; but he must say with the Disciples, What Manner of Man is this? And with the Rulers, on another Occasion, that a notable Miracle hath been done, we cannot deny. But let the Author of these Wonders appeal
to

to *Abraham* for a Promise and Prediction of himself, and he shall be pertly asked, how a Patriarch could see the Day of a Man not fifty Years old. With how much Reason then and Judgment, has the learned Author of the Discourses on Prophecy sunk the Force of its Evidence below that of Miracles, in the Point of confuting an obstinate *Jew*, or a more obdurate, caviling and blasphemous Creature, a modern Infidel? And with how great Propriety does he propose, not a partial but a comprehensive Consideration of the Relation, Connection, Extent and Beauty of the Prophecies, as an Argument proper to disarm this Reasoner of all his little Cavils, Chicane, and Banter, and to make, if not him, at least the unprejudiced Part of Mankind cry out with the *Psalmist*—How dear are thy Counsels to me, O Lord! How great is the Sum of them!

Here I am asked; If the Evidence of ancient Prophecy is any Way inferior to that of Miracle, in Point of Conviction and Plainness, why *Jesus*, and his Apostles after him, continually urge it in their Disputes with the *Jews*. The Answer is obvious: The *Jews* had a Right to demand the one Evidence, as well

well as the other; that of Miracles to prove his Mission as a Prophet; that of Prophecy, to prove his being that particular Prophet, their Scriptures taught them to look for and expect. Our Saviour then, among these People, on all proper Occasions, appeals to their Prophets in general, as uncontested Witnesses of his Person, Character, and Works. He appeals much more frequently to his Works, and demands Admission upon their single Evidence, and says, if ye will not believe my Word, believe me for my Works Sake. The Apostles tread in the Steps of their Master; with those, who believed the *Jewish* Scriptures, they reason out of them, declaring, they said no other Things, than what those Scriptures had before said: Sometimes shewing the Correspondence of the Life and Death of their Lord to these prophetic Accounts; sometimes presenting him as a Person, approved of God, by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs. To the *Athenians*, and the rest of the Gentile World, St. Paul speaks not a Syllable of the Argument from the *Jewish* prophetic Writings; but argues against Idolatry from the Topics of natural Reason, and exhorts to Repentance from the Authority of that Prophet, who proved his heavenly Mission,

sion, by the miraculous Fact of his Resurrection. Upon the whole, there cannot, in the Nature of the Thing, be an Argument, so plain, so strong, so little liable to Ambiguity and Contradiction, as Miracles. This accordingly was the Credential granted to the Prophets themselves, before and after Christ, in Order to obtain immediate Credit, and was the Foundation of that they demanded for their Predictions and Messages.

But the Examiner says, that Christ himself has previously determined this Point fully in Favour of Prophecy. I am surprized, and listen with Reverence and Silence, to hear where he has done this: It is, it seems, in the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*: I recover, and smile. The rich Man, in Hell, seeing *Lazarus* in *Abraham's* Bosom, requests he would send him with a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue: but being told, that was neither proper, nor possible, he next extends his Care to his surviving Brethren; and therefore was not the worst rich Man, we may have seen in the World. Accordingly, the next Petition he puts up is, that *Lazarus* might be sent to warn his Relations, lest they also, perhaps led by his Example of living too, should
come

come into that Place of Torment. *Abraham* answers, they have *Moses* and the Prophets; let them hear them. *Dives* urges, and says, nay, Father *Abraham*, but if One went to them from the dead, they will repent: And he said unto him, if they hear not *Moses* and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. The Examiner's Comment on this Passage is the most extraordinary one, I ever met with; and I propose it, as an Instance of his Skill, or Design, in the Interpretation of Scripture. He says, our Saviour here clearly intimates, that the Word of Prophecy, as delivered in the Old Testament, carried with it a firmer Proof of the Truth of his Gospel to the *Jews*, than even the greatest of all his Miracles. Behold the Inversion of all Argument, the Destruction of common Sense! The Point here is not the Mission of *Jesus*, but bringing wicked *Jews* to Repentance for their loose and riotous Lives: And in all Construction, the Language and Reasoning of the Text is the very Reverse of that, which is, so artfully, shall I say? or heedlessly put upon it. *Dives* apprehends, a Monitor from the dead might prevail, where *Moses* and the Prophets had not: he petitions for the awakening

Evidence of this Miracle, as the last, and strongest, not without Hopes, it might be more successful with his Brethren, than the ordinary Means proposed by *Moses*. *Moses* indeed tells him, he was mistaken; not in the Superiority of the Evidence requested, but in the Success of it: The Fault was not in the Evidence, but in the Men, who, unconverted under ordinary Means of Grace, would continue so under any that could be given: If they hear not *Moses* and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though this strongest Evidence was vouchsafed them, though one rose from the dead. This is exactly agreeable to the Dealings of God with Men, who furnishes the Willing and Believing with sufficient Means to convert and save them; but does not force Conviction, where those Means are slighted and refused: gives to him, who useth what he hath, and takes from him, who does otherwise: does not many mighty Works in this or that Region, because of their unreasonable Unbelief, under former Favours.

Since this Author has been so unhappy in the Choice of a Text, which directly makes against him; let me try my Luck in the Choice of another, which, I hope, will
finish

finish the Business of this Controversy. If I had not done among them, says Christ, the Works, which none other Man did, they had not had Sin. What? Had they had no Sin, or comparatively none, if they had neglected this superior Evidence of *Moses* and the Prophets? Is their Sin so far increased, as to be pronounced entirely made, by their Neglect of an inferior Evidence, that of Miracles and mighty Works? No; it is contradictory, it is impossible. These mighty Works, which none other Man did, were the strongest Credentials, Heaven could give to the great Reformer of the World, the last Effort of divine Mercy, to recover a lost Species: And therefore God, who hitherto winked at the Disorders in the Times of Ignorance, and under less perfect and enlightened Dispensations; now commanded Men every where to repent. The Resistance of the *Jews* to the Evidence of these mighty Works, done amongst them, was their great Sin: And the blasphemous Imputation of them to a wrong Agency, was resisting the Holy Ghost, and that particular Sin against him, which with Difficulty, if at all, admits of Forgiveness, and was, and is the Cause of their utter Obduration, Destruction, and Dispersion to this Day.

I must not dismiss this Author, without observing upon the profane Touches and mordant Hints, which sparkle to catch the Eye, all through his Pamphlet. There is indeed no Respect of Persons in it; and the same Liberty is taken with the most sacred, as with the most honourable Characters. The History of *Moses*, before his own Time, is nothing but Fable, Fancy and Invention. The Temptation of Christ by the Devil, has it's Difficulties, and is perhaps no more than a Vision; which may soon come down to an idle Dream, a Nothing. In vain the Apostle declares himself Eye-witness of Christ's Majesty at his Investiture in the Mount, and Hearer of the Voice from above, directing Attention to him, as the beloved Son of God: In vain has the Evangelist related all the Circumstances of this Appearance in Glory, named the Persons conversing, and the Subject of the Conversation: The whole Transaction might be no more, than a Rabbinical Reverie: The Apostle might be asleep, or in such a Fright, that he knew not what he said: Or he might take it for a common Bath-Kol, and so pay no great Attention to it: " His Assurance in this Affair does not appear very great; since after all the Conviction, which

" he

“ he himself had received from it, we know,
 “ that his Faith was still so infirm, as to be-
 “ tray him into a shameful Denial of his
 “ Master, whom he had seen so wonder-
 “ fully glorified : ” Which shameful Denial
 however reflects on Prophecy, as much as on
 this wonderful Appearance; since the Denier
 of his Lord had the Evidence of both, and
 yet denied him.

But how could the Voice on the Mount
 be taken for Bath-Kol? The Author is re-
 solved to be merry, though at the Expence
 of his own Observation in a preceding Note,
that the Bath-Kol was accompanied always
with Thunder : but not a Word is there here
 of Thunder in all the Evangelical Account.
 I mention the Observation, to expose the
 Self-contradiction of the Examiner, not for
 the Truth of the Observation itself, which is
 far from being the Case. The Bath-Kol was
 a silly Art of Divination among the later
Jews, and seldom, if at all, accompanied
 with Thunder: As appears from the Sample
 of this Sort of Guesswork, from many others
 of the same Kind in the *Talmud*, given us by
 one of the learned Deans appealed to. A Rabbi
 wants to know, whether his distant Friend Sa-
 muel

*mu*el is dead, or alive: In his Journey to him, he hears a School-boy read out of the Bible this Passage—and *Samuel* died—and thence concludes his Friend is dead, and gives over farther Search. This, it must be confessed, is extremely like the Transaction on the Mount: However, if it is not, it serves prettily to degrade, travestie, and burlesque it.

And here I cannot help remarking, that the Author discovers, all through this Piece, less Reserve and Caution, and more Haste and Anger, than in any other of his Works, which I have seen. He seems to have dropped the Character of the Philosopher, by the Loss of his Temper; and that of the Gentleman, by his Neglect of Manners. There is a Civility, a Decency, which should polish all our Conversation with Men of Distinction, and soften, at least, the Language of our Disputes with them. *Nonsense and flimsy Stuff*, are but coarse Words to be thrown in the Face of a Person of Dignity; more so, where great Abilities give a Lustre to the Station; and seem but a small Refinement on the Dialect of the British Fishery.

But whatever of this Kind our Author has already done, he breathes out Threatenings of more.

more. Not content to affront, he insults; and talks of future Examinations of the rest of his Lordship's Discourses and learned Dissertations, in which as little Ceremony may be expected, as in this. I verily believe, that his Lordship, who has experienced the impotent Outrage of this first Attack, will see no Occasion to be apprehensive of a second; unless this Author is so far the Reverse of the *Gallic* Character, *ut primus impetus sit minor, quam feminarum; secundus, plus quam virorum.*

For my own Part, I am more concerned for the Promise, or Threatening; I know not which to call it; of a Defence of Christian Prophecy on a new Plan; than for any Success he may flatter himself with, against this, or any other worthy Advocates of our Religion. An open Enemy puts one upon one's Guard; but a treacherous Friend strikes with more Ease the Bosom, which receives him. However this may be, the " World is bid to expect, at an " Occasion hereafter of more Leisure, the Sum " of an Enquiry, originally drawn up, when " this Question of Prophecy was warmly controverted, and many Objections raised to the " Disadvantage of the Christian Cause: In " which Enquiry, instead of contriving any " evasive

“ evasive Expedients, or fanciful Systems, to
 “ elude the Force of such Objections, he pro-
 “ poses, *to the Shame and Confusion of all who*
 “ *went before him*, to examine seriously and
 “ impartially, what Solution of them the Sub-
 “ ject itself, when fairly stated, will supply,
 “ and to embrace that Opinion, which the E-
 “ vidence of allowed Facts will naturally sug-
 “ gest.” But notwithstanding all this Can-
 dour, Seriousness, Impartiality, and Ingenuity,
 which are the Glory of this, and the Want of
 which is the Reproach of other Writers; I
 dare say, the Friends of our Religion would
 very willingly excuse him the Trouble of this
 new and elaborate Work, in her Vindication.
 Christianity and its Well-wishers, if perso-
 nated and allowed to speak, would use the
 Words, which *Cicero* makes *Sicily* and her
 injured Inhabitants say to a Person, who, un-
 desired, thrust himself into the Office of de-
 fending that Province, in order to betray it.
 —*Sine nos per eum nostras fortunas defendere,*
cujus fides est nobis cognita. In aliena causa
loquere? Eos defendes, qui se ab omnibus deser-
tos potius, quam abs se defensos esse malunt?

I am, my LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant.